

# NATIONAL SPORTING LIBRARY

## NEWS



## LETTER

A Research Center for Turf and Field Sports,  
their History and Social Significance

Middleburg, Virginia 22117

June 1982

Judith Ozment, Librarian

No. 14

### THE HARRY T. PETERS JR. COLLECTION

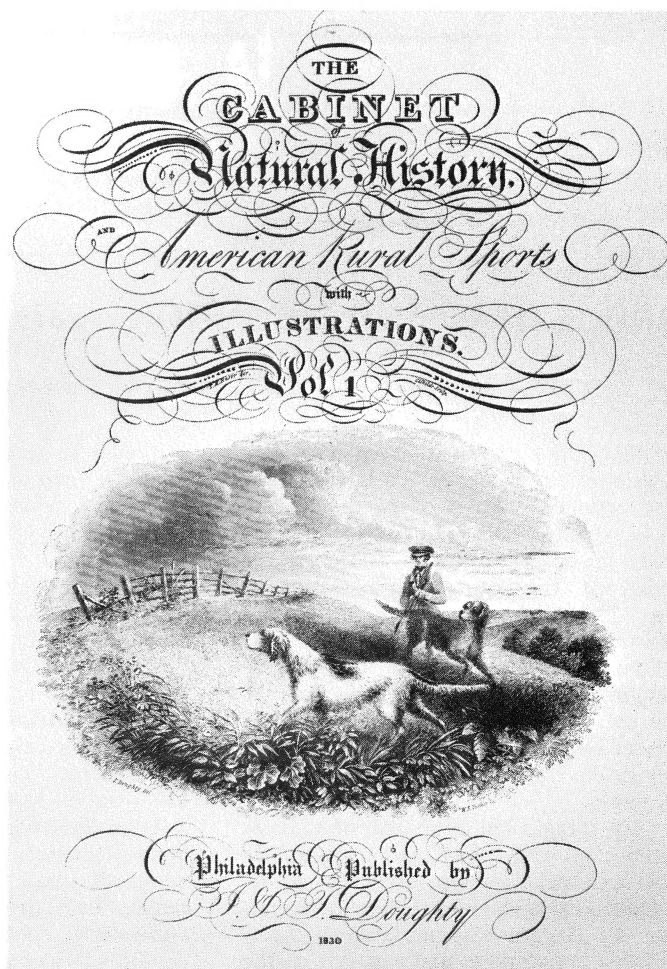
Alexander Mackay-Smith

From its founding in 1954 the National Sporting Library has had the heart-warming support of Harry T. Peters Jr., of "Wyndholme", Orange County, Virginia, one of the principal collectors of American sporting books and pictures, who died in December 1981, a great loss to the entire sporting community. He came from a family of collectors — a cousin, Electra Webb, founded the Shelbourne Museum, Shelbourne, Vermont, based on her own collection; his grandfather acquired British sporting paintings by George Stubbs, Ben Marshall, John Ferneley, etc.; his father Harry T. Peters Sr. wrote three definitive books on the 19th century colored lithographs of Currier and Ives and other publishers, and collected American portraits of trotters; while Mr. Peters himself added portraits painted in America by Edward Troye (1808-1874) and Henri DeLattre (1802-1867). He also collected Chinese Treaty Port paintings and porcelain, being a Director and Chairman of the Acquisitions Committee of the China Trade Museum, Boston. Furthermore he served as Master of the Montpelier Hounds, Virginia.

Many of the books collected by Mr. Peters Sr. were sold at auction by Parke Bernet, New York, in 1960, but those of particular interest to his son went to "Wyndholme", where they were joined by others representing the enthusiasms of its late owner. Thanks to the generosity of the Executors of the Peters Estate, Messrs. Mel Nace, Thomas Richards and Ralph Nichols, and to the good offices of Gordon Barton of the Sporting Gallery, Middleburg, Virginia, the National Sporting Library has been given the books on sport and sporting art from the Peters Library.

The most extensive item is a full run of the *British Sporting Magazine*, the first publication of its kind, 156 volumes, for the years 1792 to 1870, beautifully bound in half leather, and extensively illustrated with engravings. Accompanying the set is the 1892 volume on the illustrations by Sir Walter Gilbey.

Another complete periodical run are the 28 issues, each with two illustrations, of the *Cabinet of Natural History and American Rural Sports*, published in Philadelphia by Thomas and John Doughty, bound in three volumes dated 1830, 1832 and 1833. This is the first color plate sporting title published in the United States. Fifty three of the fifty six plates are hand colored lithographs, one plate is a hand colored engraving and two are black and white engravings. Volume I also includes in the text a series of wood engravings by Reuben S. Gilbert of Philadelphia. The plates, each with a landscape background, depict the regional birds and animals of the United States, and the (then) unusual buffalo, prairie wolf, mountain sheep, flamingo, pelican, etc. Thomas Doughty (1793-1856), often termed the



father of American landscape painting, drew 23 out of the 24 lithographs in the first volume. Portraits of the painter Charles Willson Peale and of the naturalist William Bartram appear as frontispieces to Vols. I and II. A complete set such as this is one of the great rarities of American sporting literature.

The balance of the collection consists of 154 volumes of which 52 are devoted to sporting art and to art reference works. Mr. Peters exhibited greyhounds with great success — he was also in demand as an all breed judge at American Kennel Club shows and as a judge of foxhounds and beagles in shows held

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## THE HARRY PETERS JR.

### COLLECTION

(Continued from Page 1)



This hand-colored lithograph entitled "Wild Horses" and drawn on stone by Thomas Doughtry appears opposite the title page of Vol. II (1832) of the "Cabinet of Natural History and American Rural Sports." HTP Collection

under the auspices of the Masters of Foxhounds Association of America and of the National Beagle Club. There are 29 books devoted to dogs, particularly to greyhounds and foxhounds. Under the heading Waterfowl and Upland Game Birds, there are 25 titles, and under Cockfighting 17 — both greyhounds and gamecocks were liberally represented in the Peters collection of paintings sold at auction in New York, June 4, 1982 by Christie, Manson and Woods. The list is concluded by 12 books devoted to horses and coaching, nine to fishing, six to boxing and seven to natural history.

The Peters collection is obviously one of the major gifts which the National Sporting Library has received during its 35 year history, a gift for which we are profoundly grateful. In later newsletter issues special sections of the collection will receive more detailed consideration. Certain titles of special rarity and interest together with extended captions, appear elsewhere in this issue as illustrations.

## BRUCE (1868) AND O'CONNOR (1927) ACQUISITIONS

### O'Connor's Notes on the Thoroughbred from Kentucky Newspapers

Since the publication of our last newsletter the National Sporting Library has fortunately acquired two very rare books which are of vital importance to the study of early American Thoroughbred pedigrees. The first is entitled *Notes on the Thoroughbred from Kentucky Newspapers* compiled by John L. O'Connor, privately printed by Louis Lee Haggin. There is no indication of a date nor are the pages numbered. It was in fact printed by the Transylvania Printing, Co., Lexington, Kentucky in 1927, a volume of 380 pages.

Mr. Haggin was a member of a family which to this day is famous in Thoroughbred racing and breeding, founded during the last century by James Ben Ali Haggin who maintained many hundred broodmares and stallions on the Rancho del Paso near Sacramento, California. Louis Haggin, who bred Thoroughbreds on a smaller scale near Lexington, was an assiduous collector of data on early Kentucky horses and horse sports.

His selection as the compiler of this volume was fortunate. John L. O'Connor, proprietor of the New York Electrical School, working largely from newspaper stallion advertisements, accumulated a major collection which, along with the advice of its owner, prompted Fairfax

Harrison to write (1926-1935) the seven volumes culminating in *Early American Turf Stock*, which are the most scholarly study of any breed of livestock ever published.

The newspapers from which the contents of this volume were compiled include broken runs of the *Kentucky Gazette* from 1788 to 1831; of *The Reporter* from 1808 to 1832; and of the *Lexington Observer* and *Kentucky Reporter* from 1831 to 1833. The excerpts comprise stallion advertisements mainly of Thoroughbreds, but also of Quarter Horses, Arabians, Pacers, Trotters, Spanish horses, coach horses, hunter sires and jacks; race meetings, both advance notices and results; colt exhibitions, fairs, horse shows and so forth. There is no index.

Only five or six copies of the book are known to exist. After the Transylvania Printing Company failed to keep repeated promises to complete its work, Mr. Haggin became incensed, cancelled the contract, and had bound up only the few sets of proof sheets that had been struck off, which he then distributed to a handful of friends. The copy recently obtained by the National Sporting Library was a present to Major Louie Beard, manager of the Whitney stud farms near Lexington, Kentucky.

(Continued on page 3)



"The Universal Angler," published in London by Richard Marriott in 1676, included, bound together, the 5th edition of "The Compleat Angler" (1st ed 1653) with 21 chapters by Isaac Walton and 12 chapters ("How to Angle for a Trout or Grayling") by Charles Cotton. To this was added the 4th edition of Col. Robert Venables' "Experienc'd Angler — the art Ways and Choicest Experiments for the taking of most sorts of FISH in Pond or River", an authoritative manual of fly fishing. This is the 17th century's greatest fishing compendium. HTP Collection



## BRUCE AND O'CONNOR

### ACQUISITIONS

(Continued from Page 2)

#### The Bruce Stud Book of 1868

The British registry of Thoroughbred horses and their pedigrees, first compiled in 1791 by James Weatherby and titled the *General Stud Book*, has gone through five revisions and corrections, the last in 1891. The first volume of the book recognized as official by the Jockey club of New York, known as *The American Stud Book* and published in 1873, has never been revised — in point of fact later research, particularly in England by C. M. Prior and in America by Fairfax Harrison, points out the need for revision of both books.

The efforts to compile an American Stud Book over the period 1815-1873 have been admirably set forth by Fairfax Harrison in his brilliant essay *The Background of the American Stud Book*, privately printed for Mr. Harrison by the Old Dominion Press, Richmond, Virginia, in 1933. The man who finally achieved this goal was Sanders DeWeese Bruce (1825-1902) of Lexington, Ky., who moved to New York after the Civil War and on August 5, 1865 published the first issue of the weekly



*The Royal Cockpit in the Reign of Charles the First. An illustration, colored by hand, from William Sketchley's "The Cocker." HTP Collection*

magazine *Turf, Field and Farm*, in which he announced his intention to compile and publish an American Stud Book. Bruce was able to enlist the financial aid of Robert Aitcheson Alexander of "Woodburn", Woodford County, Kentucky, the most influential breeder of the 19th century, and of John J. McKinnon, a leading Chicago lawyer, owner of the stallion Red Eye and of the great broodmare Magenta, plus the editorial assistance of Joseph Cairn Simpson who also wrote the Introduction. Volume I appeared in the summer of 1868. Fairfax Harrison wrote: "As a piece of book making it is superior to any subsequent volume ever issued. Admirably printed (by the Chicago publishers of law books, E. B. Myers and Company) in large, legible type on fine paper and handsomely bound in half-calf, with tooled and paneled backs, it was also embellished with twenty fine steel plates, portraits of the most famous American and English Thoroughbreds". It is this volume which has been added to the shelves of the National Sporting Library. Its title page reads in part: "by S. D. Bruce, Editor of the *Turf, Field and Farm*, Volume I, A to L."

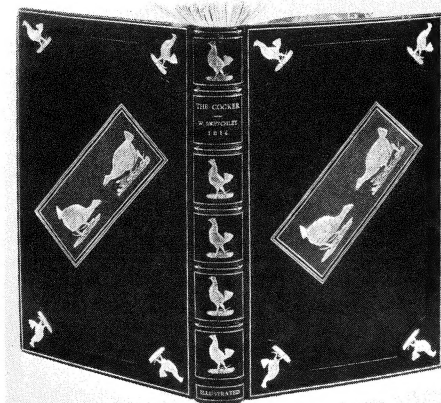
Fairfax Harrison added: "Very few copies of this volume are today in existence." The second half of the alphabet M to Z still remained to be published. Furthermore strong pressures were brought

to bear for a revision of Volume I; certain pedigrees which it set forth did not suit commercial breeders — Bruce was forced to yield, in some cases adding, subtracting and suppressing. By the time Vol. II and the revised Vol. I were ready (1873) Mr. Alexander had died and McKinnon had quarrelled with Bruce and withdrawn his support. The title page of Vol. II read M to Z, while the title pages of the 1868 and 1873 Vol. I both read A to L. On their face, the owners of the 1868 Vol. I needed only buy the 1873 Vol. II — there would thus be little demand for the 1873 Vol. I.

Actually the title page of the 1868 Vol. I was misleading — its contents included only horses whose names began with the letters A to K. Bruce began his 1873 Vol. II with the letter M and included in Vol. I the letter L, making the purchase of this latter volume essential.

Thus overnight the 1868 Vol. I became useless — most of them were discarded. Bruce, and later the Jockey Club when it took over the series (1896), bought up and destroyed every copy they could find. Most of those which survived are minus the engraved illustrations, extracted and sold separately by dealers.

The National Sporting Library is now the proud possessor of a perfect copy in good condition with all the plates. Its text invites comparison by scholars with the text of 1873.



### Cockfighting

*This is the 3rd (and revised) 1814 edition of "The Cocker," by William Sketchley, beautifully bound by Riviere and Son, which has been called a classic of the sport, the best known of any of the books on the subject, thoughtful, well-written, based on half a century of careful observation, and not in any way 'cribbed' from former writers. HTP Collection.*

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